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On the Production of Security

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There are two manners by which to consider society. According to one, no law providential, immutable, has presided over the formation of different human associations; organized in a manner purely artificial by the primitive legislators, they can be, by consequence, modified or remade by other legislators, to the measure that *social science* progresses. In this system the government plays a considerable role, for it is on the government, depositary of the principle of authority, which the task to modify, to remake society daily, is incumbent.

According to the others, *au contraire*, society is a fact purely natural; like the ground which supports her, she moves by virtue of laws general, pre-existent. In this system, there is *no*, rightfully speaking, social science; there is not but an economic science which studies the natural organism of society and which shows how functions this organism.

What is, in this latter system, the function of government and its natural organization? This is what we propose ourselves to examine.

Meanwhile, I must say that we have, until presently, recoiled before this rigorous consequence of the principle of free competition.

One of the economists who has extended furthest the application of the principle of liberty, M. Charles Dunoyer, thought, "that the functions of governments would never think to fall into the domain of private activity."[1]

So here is a clear, evident, example brought to the principle of free competition. This exception is all the more remarkable, that it is unique.

No doubt, we encounter economists who establish exceptions more numerous to this principle; but we can heartily affirm that these are not pure economists. The veritable economists agree generally to say, on one side, that the government must limit itself to guarantee the security of the citizens; on another side, that freedom of labor and of exchange must be, for all the rest, entire, absolute.

But what is the *raison d'être* of the exception relative to security? For what special reason can the production of security not be abandoned to free competition? Why must it be submitted to another principle and organized by virtue of another system?

On this point, the masters of the science hush, and M. Dunoyer, who has clearly indicated the exception, researches not upon which motive it leans.

[1] In his remarkable book *On the Freedom of Labor*, vol. III, p. 363, ed. Guillaumin.

"...It is written: 'It is I who makes the sovereigns.' This is not a phrase of the church, a metaphor of the preacher; it is the truth, literal, simple, and palpable. It is a law of the political world. God makes the kings, word for word. He prepares the royal races, he nourishes them in the midst of a cloud which hides their origin. Then they appear crowned in glory and honor; they place themselves."[2]

After this system, which incarnates the will of Providence in certain men and which dresses these *elect*, these *anointed* in an authority quasi-divine, the *subjects* have evidently not a single right; they must submit, *without exam*, to the decrees of the sovereign authority, as if it enacted the decrees of Providence itself.

"The body is the tool of the soul," said Plutarch, and the soul is the tool of God. According to the school of Divine Right, God would make the choice of certain souls and would use them as tools in order to govern the world.

If men *had faith* in this theory, nothing assuredly could rattle a government of Divine Right. By misfortune, they have completely ceased to have faith. Why?

Because one beautiful day they were advised to examine and to reason, and, examining and reasoning, they have discovered that their governments did not direct them better than they could have done themselves, simple mortals without communication with Providence.

Free examination has demonetized the fiction of divine right, to the point that the subjects of monarchs or aristocrats of divine right do not obey them any more than they believe themselves *to have interest* in obeying them.

The communist fiction, did it have better luck?

After the communist theory, of which Rousseau is the Grand Priest, authority descends no more from above; it comes from below.

The government demands it no longer from Providence, it demands it from united men, from the nation *one, indivisible, and sovereign*.

This is what the communists suppose, partisans of the sovereignty of the people. They suppose that human reason has the power to discover better laws, organization the more perfect which convenes with society; and that, in practice, it is following a free debate between opposed opinions that these laws are discovered; that if there is no unanimity, if there is division still after the debate, it is the majority who has reason, as containing a more great number of reasonable individuals (these individuals are, of course, supposed equal, otherwise the framework crumbles); by consequence, they affirm that the decisions of the majority must make *law*, and that the minority is held to submit to it, even though they would hurt its convictions most deeply rooted and its interests most dear.

Such is the theory; but, in practice, the *authority* of the decisions of the

[2] *On the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions* - Preface.

majority, does it indeed have this character irresistible, absolute, that we suppose of it? Is it always, in all cases, respected by the minority? Can it be so?

Let us take an example.

Let us suppose that socialism succeeds to propagate among the working classes of the countrysides, as it is already propagated among the working classes of the towns; that it finds itself, by consequence, in the state of majority in the country, and that, profiting from this situation, it sends to the Legislative Assembly a socialist majority and names a socialist president; let us suppose that this majority and this president, invested of the sovereign authority, decree, as demanded one celebrated socialist, the levy of an impost of three billion on the rich, to the end of organizing the labor of the poor; is it probably that the minority will submit itself peaceably to this spoliation unequal and absurd, yet legal, yet *constitutional*?

No, without doubt, it will not hesitate to ignore the *authority* of the majority and to defend its property.

Under this regime, like under the preceding, we thus do not obey the depositary of authority but inasmuch as we believe we *have interest* to obey them.

This is what leads us to affirm that the moral foundation of the principle of authority is neither more solid nor more large, under the regime of monopoly or of communism, than it could be under a regime of liberty.

From this faculty left to the consumer to purchase, wherever seems good to him, security, is born a constant emulation between all producers, each striving, by the attraction of a good deal or of a justice more prompt, more complete, better, to increase his clientèle or to maintain it.[3]

Let the consumer be not free, *au contraire*, to purchase security wherever seems good to him, and just as soon you see a large career open itself to arbitrariness and to bad management*. Justice becomes costly and slow, the police vexatious, individual liberty ceases to be respected, the price of security is abusively exaggerated, unequally drawn, according to force, the influence of which is at the disposal of such or such a class of consumers; we see in a word, to emerge in single file all the abuses inherent to monopoly or to communism.

Under the regime of free competition, war between the producers of security ceases totally to have its *raison d'etre*. Why would they make war? To conquer the consumers? But the consumers would not let them conquer. They would keep themselves certainly to make sure their persons and their properties by the men who would have attempted, without scruple, on the persons and on the properties of their competition. If an audacious vanquisher wanted to impose on them the law, they would call immediately to their aid all the free consumers that would

[3] See *Footnote 3* below

menace, like them, this aggression, and they would do justice. Just as war is the natural consequence of monopoly, peace is the natural consequence of liberty.

Under a regime of liberty, the natural organization of the industry of security would not differ from that of the other industries. In the small cantons a simple entrepreneur could suffice. This entrepreneur would bequeath his industry to his son, or would cede it to another entrepreneur. In the extended cantons, a company would unify only enough of resources to exercise accordingly this important and difficult industry. Well directed, this company could easily perpetuate herself, and security perpetuate itself with her. In the industry of security, as well as in the greater part of the other branches of production, this later mode of organization would finish probably by substituting for the first.

On one side, this would be the monarchy, on the other, the republic; but the monarchy without the monopoly, and the republic without the communism.

On both sides this would be the authority accepted and respected in the name of *utility*, and not the authority imposed by *terror*.

That such a hypothesis can be realized, here is without doubt what will be contested. But, at the risk of being qualified a utopist, we say that this is not contestable, and that an attentive examination of the facts will result, more and more, in the favor of liberty, the problem of government, even than all the other economic problems. We are indeed convinced, in what concerns us, that associations will be established one day in order to claim the *freedom of government*, as it has been established in order to claim the freedom of commerce.

And we do not hesitate to add that after that this later progress will have been realized, all artificial obstacles to the free action of the natural laws which rule the economic world having disappeared, the situation of the different members of society will become *the best possible*.

Footnote 3:
Adam Smith, from whom the admirable spirit of observation extended to all things, remarks that justice has gained much, in England, by the competition done by different courts:

"The fees of court seem originally to have been the principal support of the different courts of justice in England. Each court endeavoured to draw to itself as much business as it could, and was, upon that account, willing to take cognizance of many suits which were not originally intended to fall under its jurisdiction. The court of king's bench, instituted for the trial of criminal causes only, took cognizance of civil suits; the plaintiff pretending that the defendant, in not doing him justice, had been guilty of some trespass or misdemeanour. The court of exchequer, instituted for the levying of the king's revenue, and for enforcing the payment of such debts only as were due to the king, took cognizance of all other contract debts; the planitiff alleging that he could not pay the king, because the defendant would not pay him. In consequence of such fictions, it came, in many cases, to depend altogether upon the parties, before what court they would choose to have their cause tried, and each court endeavoured, by superior dispatch and impartiality, to draw to itself as many causes as it could. The present admirable constitution of the courts of justice in England was, perhaps, originally, in a great measure, formed by this emulation, which anciently took place between their respective judges: each judge endeavouring to give, in his own court, the speediest and most effectual remedy which the law would admit, for every sort of injustice." (*Wealth of Nations*, V.i.b. para 21)